

*The Blessedness of dying in the LORD
considered*

144

I N A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D A T T H E

Weigh-House in Little Eastcheap

On the D E A T H of the

Rev. WILLIAM LANGFORD, D. D.

Who departed this Life *April 23, 1775.*

In the 71st Year of his Age,

W I T H

M E M O I R S

Of his LIFE and CHARACTER,

To which is added,

The S P E E C H

A T H I S

I N T E R M E N T.

By THOMAS GIBBONS, D. D.

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ІСКУСТВА ВІД СІДІВ ВІДОВО

TO THE
C H U R C H

Lately under the Pastoral Care of
The Rev. Dr WILLIAM LANGFORD,

AND THE
WIDOW and CHILDREN of the Deceased,

This SERMON,
Preached and Published at their united Request,

Is most respectfully Inscribed by
Their most affectionate Friend,

And Servant in the Gospel,

THOMAS GIBBONS.

THE
C H U R C H

THE REV'D WILLIAM LANCORD

AND HIS

WIDOW AND CHILDREN TO THE PARISH

THE SUMMON

BY THE REV'D WILLIAM LANCORD



AS IT IS TO BE READ IN THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY

THE 25TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 1777.

BY THOMAS CIBBERN

THOMAS CIBBERN

The Blessedness of dying in the LORD.

R E V. XIV. 13.

And I heard a Voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours; and their Works follow them.

THOUGH our Text may be designed more especially for the Encouragement of such as may be called forth to Martyrdom for the Sake of the Gospel, yet it may contain in it a Truth which may extend to all true Believers in CHRIST, in all Generations, who depart from this Life in Union and Favour with him, their almighty and gracious Redeemer. Accordingly we read of such as have *fallen asleep in Christ**, by whom, without any Thing that appears to me like a Force upon the Expression, may be intended all his Disciples, who have died out of the World in the Faith and Hope of the Gospel: and in like Manner we read of *sleeping in Jesus*†, and of *the Dead in Christ rising first*‡; by whom we may understand all his People in all the Ages of Time, who have died before his second Coming, as they are evidently distinguished from such as shall be found alive at that Day.

B

Blessed

* 1 Cor. xv. 18.

+ 1 Thess. iv. 14.

‡ 1 Thess. iv. 16.

Blessed are the Dead then who die in the Lord, that is, Blessed are the Dead who die in Christ, in the Faith of him, in Dependence upon him, in Conformity to him, and in special Union with him. It is added *from henceforth*, that is, blessed are the Dead, who die in the Lord, from the present Time, the Time of their Death. Their Felicity commences at their Departure hence. Better to them is the Day of their Death than the Day of their Birth. At their Birth they enter into a World of Sin and Sorrow, at their Death they are admitted into the Regions of Purity and Joy. There are no Blanks, no empty Spaces that intervene between the Dissolution of their Bodies, and the Blessedness of their Spirits in Heaven. They step at Death out of an imperfect, sinful, and afflicted State into a State of Perfection, Glory, and Happiness. There is no intermediate Purgatory for them who die in the Lord, but they instantly ascend to the Mansions of celestial Life and Happiness; nor is there any Sleep as to their Souls between their Death and their Resurrection, whatever may be the Condition of their Bodies, but, *while the Dust returns to the Dust as it was, the Spirit returns to God who gave it* *, and is at once made happy in his beatific Vision, and Enjoyment. Earth and Heaven, as it were, share their own between them at a Believer's Death. The Earth receives the Body, of which it was formed, and the Father of Spirits takes Home to his own Family, to the Bosom of his Love, the Soul, his own Offspring, such at first by Creation, when it became a Spirit like himself, and afterwards a second Time by Regeneration, when it received his holy Image, and in that most honourable and happy Sense became a *Partaker of a divine Nature* §. Further, it is said of the Dead, *that they rest from their Labours, or their Sorrows* †. They had, some of them more particularly, a wearisome, painful Pilgrimage; they met

* Eccl. xii. 7.

§ 2 Pet. i. 4.

† Κένσος, metaphorice denotat Calamitates, Ærumnas, et Adversitates, cum quibus in hac Vitâ p̄c conflictantur. Stockius in Verb.

met with many a pricking Brier, and grieving Thorn ; and they underwent many a sharp Conflict, while they were here on Earth. They suffered much, and they suffered long from the Unkindness, and Oppression of Men, from the Disorders and Pains of the Body, from the Temptations and Assaults of Satan, and from the Burden of Indwelling Sin, the sorest of all Distresses, and they expired, it may be, in Bonds and Imprisonment, or by the Ax or Sword, or Fire, or Rack, for the Testimony of the **LORD**, and their immoveable Fidelity to him ; but now they rest from *their Labours, their Sorrows* : and they are blessed for this very Purpose, or in this very Respect, that they might rest from them, and never return to them more. Their evil Things are all over, their good Things have succeeded in their Place, and shall abide with them for ever. The Season of Rest, the Year of Jubilee, when these Servants of the **LORD** go free, is come. All before them is untroubled, everlasting Tranquillity and Joy. It is added, *and their Works follow them*, or, as the Passage might be more exactly rendered, *their Works follow with them* *. Their Works of Piety and Goodness, though so much neglected here, though covered with Oblivion by Men, nay more vilified and ill-requited in our World these Works shall not be forgotten above, but shall follow with them as their Retinue, their Train, into the Presence of **God** ; where they shall be accepted in the most gracious and honourable Manner, and, through the Riches of Divine Mercy, be crowned with eternal Glory. A Christian at Death goes Home, as the Sun at Setting departs from the Skies. He carries all his Beauties of Holiness with him, and what he has either done or suffered is come up in Memorial before **God**, and not one Service which he has performed, or one Trial which he has undergone,

* τα δι εγγα αυτων ακολυθαι μετ' αυτων.

shall be found to have escaped the Eye of his *Lord*, or shall fail of its Reward.

But let us not only observe *what* is said in our Text, but *in what Manner* it is said. What is said is, *Blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord from henceforth, and that they rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them.* “ But “ what Ground have we to conclude that what is here “ said is true? Ineffable and everlasting Blessedness is “ undoubtedly declared, but what Regard is due to the “ Declaration? Is not this Happiness Imagination, Fancy, “ Dream, or is it unquestionable Reality? Is there firm “ Foundation upon which Faith may cast its Anchor?” *I heard a Voice, says John, that eminently good and holy man, known so through the whole of his Character and Life, and who may therefore be believed, I heard a Voice from Heaven, not from Earth, where there are much Falshood and Mistake, and where are ten thousand thousand Deceptions and Errors every Day, but I heard a Voice from Heaven, from the excellent Glory, from the Oracle of God, the true and faithful God, who cannot lie, a Voice from Him who lives for ever and ever, from Him who knows all Things, and especially what he himself determines to fulfil, and who is too holy to pronounce an Untruth, and too wise and powerful to be frustrated in his Intentions, for his Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his Pleasure.* This Voice from Heaven commands the Apostle to *write*, hereby to denote the great Importance of the Truth that was to be made known, or that it was worthy to be preserved upon safe and sure Record for the Instruction and Comfort of the People of God in every Age. As if it had been said, “ Let not what is “ now declared be forgotten; let it not pass away like a transient Sound that dies into the Air, but *write* the Truth; “ let it be taken down, let it be transcribed, and as far as “ you can immortalized, as the ever-living Hope of all

" the Saints of GOD, of all true Believers in JESUS
 " CHRIST, through all the Nations of the World, and
 " through all the Ages of Time: *Blessed are the Dead*
 " *who die in the Lord.*" In this solemn Manner is this
 Truth published. A Voice from Heaven bids the Apostle,
Write, and informs him what to write. But this is not
 all the Establishment which is given to the Truth, though
 our Faith might reasonably rest upon this without any
 Thing more, but immediately it follows, *Yea, saith the*
Spirit, " the Spirit under whose Inspiration, and at whose
 Command, I John, the Servant of the LORD, write.
 " The Spirit now dictating what I record on Earth, echoes
 " to this Voice from Heaven. *Yea, saith He*; it is even
 " so, it is a certain and infallible Truth; and he adds
 " likewise, that those blessed Persons, who die in the LORD,
 " rest from their Labours, their Sorrows, and that their
 " Works follow with them. He not only joins his Wit-
 " ness, but he dwells upon, he opens, and illustrates the
 " Declaration from the Majesty on high, and shows that
 " this Blessedness consists in their Rest from their Labours,
 " or Sorrows, and in crowning their Works with the
 " immediate and everlasting Rewards of Glory." Could
 any Truth have a more solemn, a more full Confirmation?
 Here are two of the greatest Witnesses, the Oracle in Hea-
 ven, and the Spirit of Prophecy on Earth. What one
 declares, the other echoes; and surely in the Mouth of two
 such Witnesses, every Word which is here spoken must be
 established.

In further treating on the Passage, or rather the former
 Part, *Blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord*, I shall

- I. Consider what we may understand by dying in the
LORD. And,
- II. I shall shew you the Bleffedness of such as die in the
LORD.

I. I shall consider what we may understand by dying in the **LORD**.

By the **LORD** I understand our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**. This Name, **LORD**, is not unfrequently given him in Scripture, and particularly our Apostle ascribes it to him, when he says, *Rev. i. 10. that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's-day*. And as we read, as we have observed before, of *falling asleep in Christ*, and of *the Dead in Christ*, what can be more harmonious with such Passages, than that also of *dying in CHRIST*, the Language of our Text? Understanding then the **LORD** here of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, we may take the full Sense of the Expression in the following Particulars.

(1.) Dying in the **LORD** may include in it dying in the Righteousness of **CHRIST**. By dying in his Righteousness, understand dying interested in that Atonement, in that Propitiation, which our **LORD JESUS CHRIST** has made for all such as believe upon him. Thus it is declared, *that God hath made him, that is, CHRIST, to be Sin for us*, meaning a Sin-Offering, *who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him* †. In like Manner, *Christ*, says the Apostle, *is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believes* §. And elsewhere we read of the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them who believe, *for there is no Difference* ‡. Alas! how could such sinful, guilty Creatures as we are ever hope to be accepted with God into the perfect and everlasting Felicity and Glories of his Kingdom, according to the Covenant of Works? How certain our Condemnation on this Ground, as we are all Transgressors of it, and how inevitable our Ruin? But if we die in **CHRIST**'s Righteousness, if we have by Faith laid hold of him as our Ransom, if we have pleaded what he has done and suffered as our Shield against the Curses of the violated Law,

† 2 Cor. v. 21.

§ Rom. x. 4.

‡ Rom. iii. 22.

Law, and the incensed Justice of a Sin-hating and a Sin-avenging GOD, then will GOD shew Mercy to us in our Surety and Mediator. We shall be accepted in the Beloved. CHRIST will answer for us, and, as washed in his Blood, and secured by it, as the Families of *Israel* by the Blood of the Paschal Lamb sprinkled upon their Doors, we shall be presented as righteous before the Throne of GOD to our exceeding and everlasting Joy. We have made a Covenant with GOD by Sacrifice, the Sacrifice of his own Son made Flesh, and offering up himself for us, and under that Covenant, under that Shelter shall our Souls, notwithstanding all their Transgressions, find Favour with GOD even as the Judge of all, and be bid welcome into the Enjoyment of his Presence and Kingdom; and the divine Veracity, Justice, and Holiness shall all approve, shall all receive us without the least Eclipse upon their Lustres, without the least Infringement upon their Rights, and without one Objection against our Admission into the heavenly Inheritance, nay with all their harmonious Glories smiling upon us, while *Mercy reigns unto eternal Life by Jesus Christ our Lord* *. His Righteousness, to allude at least to *Psalm lxxxv. 13.* is gone before us, has entered within the Vail before us, and shall set us in the Way of his Steps, shall open the Gates of Heaven to us, and lead us to the same Glory and Joy into which he has entered, while we, and our Works accompanying us for his Sake shall be graciously approved, and rewarded. In the Garments of our elder Brother, in his Robes of Righteousness shall we, notwithstanding all our own Unworthiness, sit down as accepted Guests at the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.

(2.) Dying in the LORD may imply our dying in the Image of CHRIST. As it is needful that we should have an Interest in the Righteousness of CHRIST, or that we should be justified by divine Grace through the Redemp-

tion which is in him, so we are also to bear a Resemblance to him, and to be conformed to him as our holy Example. He is not only the High-Priest of our Profession to make Atonement and Intercession for us, but he is our Leader, and we are to follow his Steps, and he is our Master, of whom we are to learn as his Disciples. Dying in CHRIST then may include dying in his Image, in a Conformity to him as his Subjects, Friends, and Followers. No Blessedness will awake with us, when we awake in the Regions beyond Death, if we are not like CHRIST. If we have no Renewal of Heart, no Sanctification of the Spirit, no Principles, no Fruits of Holiness, if we have never known what it is to hate Sin, to make War against it, to crush and crucify it, and if we have not something of the same Mind that was in CHRIST, we may be assured that we shall never have our Lot with the Blessed who die in the LORD. CHRIST will never number Wolves, and Swine, and Goats with his Sheep. *He came to save his People from their Sins*, not only from their damning Curse, but from their leprous Impurity. As we have a Title to Heaven from the good Pleasure of our God shining forth upon us in the Son of his Love, so we have a Meetness for it in the Work of the Spirit of Grace and Holiness upon our Hearts. What would the pure Abodes on High be to a sinful Soul? What Pleasure would the Sight of an holy God afford? What Delights would there be in Communion with the Father, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST, and in contemplating their immaculate and infinite Beauties of Holiness? What Charms would there be in the Society and Songs of holy Angels? Or where would be the Satisfaction of Converses with Saints made perfect? What heavy, irksome, painful Drudgery would there be to an alienated, disaffected Spirit in holy Exercises and Employments? To such a vitiated distempered Mind the Joys of the celestial Paradise would be insipid, and all its Glories eclipsed; nay, the Joys would become Pains, and the Glories

Glories be turned into Darkness. It is not the Place, but the Suitableness of the Inhabitant to the Place, which produces and secures Happiness. Take a wicked Man from the Indulgence of his infernal Passions, and brutish Lusts, and confine him but for a Day to devout Exercises, such as Praying, Reading, Hearing the Word, singing the divine Praises, and the like, and how will he languish and groan under the heavy Load of the lingering Hours and Moments? How unfit then must he be to be a Pillar in the Temple of GOD above, and for the Employment of an whole Eternity in Adoration, Obedience, and Praise? If you was to cover a Swine with fine Linen, perfume it with the richest Odours, and bring it into the most magnificent Rooms of State, what would all these Things avail to its Enjoyment? Would they not be quite tasteless and undesirable? and would not its low impure Nature incline it to return to its Sty, and wallow in the Mire? To die in CHRIST then is to die in his Image, it is to die like CHRIST, to die under the Unction of his Spirit, to die as an holy Member of him our holy Head. And to convince you, if there was any Want of Conviction upon so clear a Point, of the Necessity of Holiness as to all such who hope to die in the LORD, let me call again to your Remembrance what is here added concerning them, that *their Works follow with them.* Saints do not go unattended to Heaven, but their Persons, and their Works of Faith, and Labours of Love are all accepted with GOD through JESUS CHRIST. How dreadful then must be their Condition, they must not be among the *Blessed* but the *Cursed*, who have no good Works to follow with them, not indeed as meritorious Pleas, as bold Claimants, but as clear and indubitable Evidences whose they are, and whom they have served; not in the Van, as if they would challenge Heaven for the Workers of them, but in the Rear, in the Train, as humble, modest, of low Account with the Authors of them,

them, but while they are cast, as it were, behind their Backs, and not seen by the People of GOD themselves, yet still they accompany them, still they are present with them, and they are all observed, and they are all rewarded by their good and gracious Father. They and their Works are found unto Praise, and Glory, and Honour; for *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord**; and *bleffed are they who do his Commandments, that they may have Right, or Privilege, to enter in through the Gates into the City*†.

(3.) And Lastly, Dying in CHRIST may intend our Dying in Union with CHRIST. Whenever any Souls are interested in the Righteousness of CHRIST, and are conformed to his holy Image, they may be assured that they are united to him, or that such a Relation has taken Place between CHRIST and them, that is not to be dissolved by Death, but that shall abide in all its Strength and Power, even when their Bodies are mouldering, or are actually mouldered into Rottenness and Dust. Their LORD, who lay in the Grave himself, though he never saw Corruption there, disdains not to account the Bodies of the Saints as his own, as belonging to him, even when they are in the lowest State of Humiliation, even when they are separated from themselves, and crumbled and scattered into Atoms, for even then they are said to sleep in Jesus §. Wherever Christians are, and whatever befalls them, still they are the LORD's. They are in his Hands, and none shall pluck them thence. The Souls and Bodies of the Saints are both the Purchase and Property of CHRIST; both of them are in his Custody, and both of them shall be delivered up as his Kingdom to his Father, and they shall be all presented by him before the Throne of his Majesty on high, saying, “Here am I, and the Children which thou hast given me.” Believers died with CHRIST, (these are the Declarations of Scripture) they

* Heb. xii. 14.

§ 1 Thess. iv. 14.

† Rev. xxii. 14.

they rose with him, they ascended with him, and they already sit with him as their Representative in heavenly Places, and ere long, in their own Persons, they shall sit down with him on his Throne, even as he also overcame, and has sat down with his Father on his Throne. CHRIST hath prepared the heavenly Glory for his People, and he will come again to receive them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also; or, as the Apostle speaks, *he shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able to subdue all Things unto himself**. How near, how permanent is the Union between CHRIST and Believers! and how should we adore and bless him for the Honour and Privilege! according to his own Prayer to his Father, *Neither pray I for these alone, for these my Apostles, but for them also that shall believe on me through their Word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the World may believe that thou hast sent me; and the Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the World may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory*†.

Having considered what we may understand by dying in the LORD, I proceed,

II. To shew you the Blessedness of such as die in the LORD. *Blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord.* And they are blessed in a Freedom from Troubles, and Sorrows, and they are blessed in an Enjoyment of positive Glory and Happiness.

(1.) They are blessed in a Freedom from Troubles, and Sorrows. They die in the LORD, and their Deaths thus ennobled,

* Phil. iii. 21.

† John xvii. 20—24.

ennobled, thus consecrated, thus beatified put an everlasting Period to all their Trials and Distresses. They have *Beauty given them for Ashes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garments of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness.* No more Weakness, no more Pain of Body, no more Oppression, no more Dejection of Mind, no more pinching Straits, no more cruel Reproaches, no more Persecution from Men, no more dangerous Snares, no more fiery Darts from Satan, no more hard Wrestlings with Indwelling Sin, no more Lamentations over its Dishonours and Defilement, no Tears and Cries for an absent GOD, no gloomy Fears of miscarrying at last, and falling short of Heaven, no one Scar of the Apostacy, no one Relick of the Curse, no, not the least Trace or Shadow of them shall accompany the People of GOD to Heaven. All their Afflictions shall die at their Deaths, and shall never have a Resurrection. The Enemies, by whom they were so long harassed, and whose Power they so much dreaded, they shall see no more for ever. As the *Israelites* stood upon the Shore, and turned their joyful Eyes upon the Deep which had buried the *Egyptian* Tyrant, and all his tremendous Army, so shall the Saints stand, as it were, upon the celestial Coast, and sing the Songs of *Moses*, and of the *Lamb*, the Songs of Providence and Grace, and Victory and Triumph shall resound for ever and ever to their GOD and Saviour. *And God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain; for the former Things are passed away**, as the Glooms of the Night are all dispersed by the overspreading Rays of the Morning. O happy Exchange! O blissful State! The Pilgrim through a Vale of Tears, through an howling Wilderness, arrives now at his City of Security and Rest. The Soldier, who fought many a rough Battle, underwent great Fatigue and Hardship, and received many a sharp Wound now ends his Campaign with

* Rev. xxi. 4.

with Honour and Joy. The weather-beaten Mariner is no longer tossed upon the stormy Ocean, no longer makes his Way through Winds and Waves, and Fogs, and Darkness, but reaches his desired Haven, and lands upon a safe pacific Shore. Saints at Death die to all natural, and to all spiritual Evil. Trouble and Sorrow, the Natives of Earth, are left behind, on the Believer's Ascent to Glory, and Peace and Pleasure are his Convoys to the Regions above, and sit down with him as his inseparable everlasting Associates there. *The Ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with Songs, and everlasting Joy upon their Head. They shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away**.

(2.) Such as die in the **LORD** are blessed in their Enjoyment of positive Glory and Happiness. True it is, that we know but little in the present World of the positive Glory and Happiness of Heaven. But yet enough of Heaven glimmers and dawns in the Promises of our **God** to assure our Minds that the Honours and Felicity of the celestial State are incomparably great and excellent, and far surpassing the highest Glories, and the highest Delights of Earth and Time. Is good Society desirable and pleasant? Our Associates will be *the innumerable Company of Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect* †. There we shall meet our Friends who died in the **LORD**, and with whom we took sweet Counsel; meet them without a Complaint or Imperfection, either on their Side, or ours, and without any Thing to abate or chill our Friendship, or to pollute or interrupt our Joys. Is a good Habitation agreeable to us, and do we, who sojourn in these earthly Houses of our Tabernacles, oftentimes groan, being burdened with the Incommodeousness of our present Dwellings, let the Saints of the **LORD** comfort themselves that a Building of **God** awaits them, *not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*,

the

* Isa. xxxv. 10.

† Heb. xii. 22, 23.

the Palace, the Temple of the **LORD** of Glory; and, if he has bestowed so much Beauty upon this World of ours, the Place of his Feet, what Magnificence, what Splendor must adorn his own Mansion, his royal Seat, built for his own special Residence, for the Majesty of his Kingdom, and for the Entertainment of Myriads and Millions of his Favourites and Sons, the Natives of Heaven, and the Colonies from this World! Further, Are we pleased with Tokens of Honour and Respect, and the more so if they are given by the noblest Personages, and the brightest Characters among Men? Let us remember, that as the Gifts of the **God over all, blessed for evermore, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords**, we may look, according to his Promises, for *white Robes* *, *Palms of Victory* *, *Crowns of Righteousness* †, *Thrones of Glory* ‡, nay, *an exceeding great and eternal Weight of Glory* ‡; and in a Word, *that we shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of our Father* §. Again, Are Provision, and Plenty, and these not only for the Support, but for the Enjoyment of Life, very grateful to us? Let us reflect, that by Metaphors taken from the choicest Dainties which this World can afford we are to learn something of the Happiness of Heaven, though we are undoubtedly to raise our Ideas of the Felicity there above all that is gross and corporeal, and may expect much nobler Enjoyments in Heaven than what ever were or can be found in the richest and most sumptuous Entertainments here below. Is it not promised, *that we shall eat of the bidden Manna* ** — *of the Tree of Life in the Midst of the Paradise of our God* †† — *that we shall be fed by the Lamb who is in the Midst of the Throne*, *that we shall be led by him to living Fountains of Waters* ‡‡, and *that we shall sit down at the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb* |||? How will that

* Rev. vii. 9.

† 2 Tim. iv. 8.

‡ Rev. iii. 21.

|| 2 Cor. iv. 17.

§ Matt. xiii. 43.

** Rev. ii. 17.

†† Rev. ii. 7.

‡‡ Rev. vii. 17.

||| Rev. xix. 9.

that Promise be fulfilled in a larger Extent than what it was ever experienced here, that we shall be abundantly satisfied with the Fatness of God's House, and that we shall drink of the River of his Pleasures*? And in his Mount Zion above, what a Feast of fat Things is prepared, a Feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat Things full of Marrow, and of Wines on the Lees well refined†. But what crowns and consummates the heavenly Happiness will be the Fruition of Father, Son, and Spirit, in their ever-glorious Persons, their condescending and gracious Characters, and their boundless and everlasting Blessings. What a Fountain of Life and Love! What an Ocean of Wonder, Glory, and Blessedness! How adapted to the Soul, and how suited to, I had almost said, its infinite Desires, and its immortal Duration! Here is the very Heaven of Heaven! Here is all that is great and good, holy and happy opened to us, and to be for ever enjoyed by us. We have now passed from the Stream to the original Spring of Life, from the Beams to the Sun of Love, and we shall know by Experience that Felicity, which the *Psalmist* prefers above all worldly Enjoyments, *the beholding the Face of God in Righteousness, and being satisfied, awaking in his Likeness*‡. The Saints of God having ascended from the Valley of the Shadow of Death, through which, as their good, though invisible, Shepherd, he comforted them with his Rod and Staff, he will now show them the Path of Life, and lead them into his beatific Presence, *where there are Fullness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore*§. Now shall we no more discern through a Glass darkly, but see Eye to Eye, and Face to Face. The Bosom, the Counsels of Deity shall be unveiled. Now shall we behold the original Springs of our Salvation, and have a full immediate View of the several Attributes, Power, Wisdom, Truth, Justice, Love, and Holiness, so divinely conspicuous, and so amazingly harmonized

* Psalm xxxvi. 8.

† Isa. xxv. 6.

‡ Psalm xvii. 15.

§ Psalm xvi. 11.

nized and concentrated in our Redemption. And as we thus behold, so we shall appropriate and enjoy. *My Lord, and my God!* how blissful the Relation amidst such ineffable Glory, such immense Felicity! This is our God, and that for ever and ever, what Satisfaction, what Solace, what *Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory* will this Thought give to our Souls! We shall look through Eternity, and see the Blessedness secure and permanent, and shall have no Fear of a departing angry God, or of finding our Happiness disturbed and broken, but as the Eye stretches through infinite Duration it shall discover nothing but Life, Peace, Honour, Joy without Measure, and without End. Under these Views, in this Experience of Felicity and Glory, how shall we adore, and love, and obey! and how dutiful, and how pleasant will it be, as we receive so largely, so constantly from God, to return ourselves to him in perpetual Services, and the Worship and Homage of the highest and holiest Devotion and Praise! And let me add, that for the Reception of this Felicity, and for the grateful Acknowledgments of it, which indeed are no small Ingredients in the Happiness of Heaven, we may well suppose that our Powers and Faculties will be much more strengthened and enlarged than what we find them in the present State, in these dark Inclosures, and under these gross Impediments of Flesh and Blood. As the Eyes and Ears of the Child in the Womb, though they are formed there, yet are designed for the future Life for which it is preparing, so the Faculties and Powers of our Souls may be considered, at least principally, as intended not for this Life, but for the Life to come; where these intellectual Seeds, now buried in a manner under the Clods, or at best that have but just begun to put forth their Buds and Blossoms, shall be called forth, be expanded, and, may I so speak, full blown for the Reception of blissful Communications, and the most copious Dews of the divine Favour, on the one Hand,

and for the grateful Returns of the richest Odours of Duty, Love, and Praise on the other. In these Recipro-
tions, I apprehend, consists the very Heaven of Heaven, ac-
cording to what is said of the New Jerusalem, *and there shall
be no more Curse; but the Throne of God, and of the Lamb
shall be in it, and his Servants shall serve him* †. But I for-
bear—We know not what we shall be in Heaven; which
gives us the Experience, must give us the compleat Idea
of its Happiness. Only let me just add, that if a Smile
from God in an Ordinance, or the Sense of his Love in
a Promise will put Gladness into our Hearts more than
what others can find when their Corn and their Wine in-
crease, how great must be the Felicity of the unclouded
Light of his Countenance, and the fullest Communications
of his Love for ever and ever! And if there is so much Plea-
sure, as we know there is, in the Enjoyment of the Favour
of an earthly Friend, or Prince, or Father, what inexpressible
and immense Happiness must there be in waking from
Death, as all those shall who die in the LORD, and find-
ing ourselves in the Arms of infinite Power, in the Bosom
of infinite Love, and in the Fruition of absolute All-suf-
ficiency, and boundless and everlasting Perfection!

From our Subject thus opened and discussed how clearly
does this Observation arise from it, that, if we have good
Grounds to conclude that our deceased Relatives and
Friends have died in the LORD, we should be comforted
under their Loss, as we are assured their Deaths are
crowned with such unspeakable and everlasting Gain?
How much better is their Situation, their State, than any
Situation or State in our World? What an happy Ex-
change have they made, and how much more delightful
must it be for them to be in the full Possession of the ce-
lestial Glory and Joys than to be still detained in these
Vales of Darkness and Sorrow? And how much more sa-

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tisfying

† Rev. xxii. 3.

tisfying to have attained the Summit of their Wishes, the Perfection of their Holiness and Happiness, than to be only pressing after, and tending to them with manifest Distance and Imperfection ?

And let me apply this Remark to You, the dear Relatives, and to You, the widowed Church of my deceased Brother, *the Reverend Dr William Langford*. Of whom permit me to speak something, however inadequate it may be to his real Worth.

He was born *September 29, 1704*, at a Place called *Westfield*, near *Battel in Sussex*. He descended from very pious Parents. His Father died when he was very young, not above three or four Years old. Soon afterwards his Mother removed to *Tenterden* in *Kent*, where the Doctor received his Grammar-Learning under one *Mr Hammond*, who was a Schoolmaster, and it is apprehended also, though we are not positive, a Clergyman. Under him his young Pupil made, as I have good Reason to believe, a very laudable and uncommon Proficiency †. From *Tenterden* he went to *Glasgow* for University-Learning in the Year *1721*, or at the latest *1722*. In *March 1723*, dated at *Glasgow-College*, he drew up, what he styles, a Covenant-Transaction with *GOD* in our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*; which thus stands in his own Manuscript :

“ O *LORD*, I am a lost Creature by Nature, and have
 “ gone astray from the Womb by innumerable actual
 “ Transgressions, which I do particularly confess to thee
 “ this Day. And, although I received the Seal of thy Co-
 “ venant in my Infant-Baptism, yea, though I have pro-
 “ fessed to renew this Covenant at thine own Table, yet
 “ I have been treacherous in Heart, and have consequently
 “ been

† It was observable by Dr *Langford's* Friends how ready he was in Citations from the Classics on proper Occasions; and it is not to be wondered at, as he himself told me, that, at an Holy day-Season, he, by the Appointment of his Master, committed to Memory the whole Poem of *Horace de Arte Poetica*, consisting of near 500 verses.

“ been guilty of the Body and Blood of the L O R D ; at
 “ least, I have great Reason to fear so. But now thou
 “ hast, blessed be thy Name ! discovered to me, in some
 “ Measure, my Guilt and Misery, and hast manifested to
 “ my Heart the satisfying Relief, which thou hast pro-
 “ vided by J E S U S C H R I S T , offering the same to me, if I
 “ will sincerely accept of it, and warranting and com-
 “ manding me to embrace the offered Salvation, in Obe-
 “ dience to thy Precept, behold, I come to close with
 “ thee, as my God in C H R I S T , this Day ; and that I may
 “ arrive at that Establishment of Spirit in this Matter, as
 “ shall be both to my great Comfort, and the Praise of thy
 “ glorious Grace, therefore am I here present to put it
 “ out of all Doubt and Question by express Words before
 “ thee, O L O R D , according to thy Will.

“ My Covenant with Death shall not stand, and my
 “ woful Agreement with Hell shall be instantly broken.
 “ I resolve, before thy Majesty, to renounce all my Sins,
 “ covenanting with thee, not to allow myself in any one
 “ of them, but conscientiously to make use of all those
 “ Means thou hast appointed for the utter Destruction of
 “ my Corruptions, particularly, depending on thy Strength
 “ and Mercy, I this Day covenant against, (1.) All the
 “ Lusts of the Flesh; promising to keep my Body in
 “ Temperance and Chastity, as long as I shall live, by
 “ watching against all the Occasions, Means, and In-
 “ citements to Impurity. (2.) Against that Pride and
 “ Haughtiness of Spirit, of which I have been so guilty
 “ from my Infancy; and I will endeavour, O L O R D , by
 “ thy Grace, after more and more Humility to the End
 “ of my Life, earnestly beseeching thee to grant me thine
 “ humbling Grace. (3.) I renounce my own Righteous-
 “ ness, which is but as filthy Rags. (4.) I hereby renounce
 “ this evil World, and all the Pomps and Vanities there-
 “ of, humbly professing, that this is the firm Resolution

“ of my Heart, and that I do most unfeignedly desire
 “ Grace from thee to practise this my Resolution, when
 “ I am called to the Trial, so that I will forsake all that
 “ is dear to me in this World, rather than turn from thee
 “ into the Ways of Sin, and that I will watch against the
 “ Temptations, whether of Prosperity or Adversity, lest
 “ they withdraw my Heart from thyself, my chief Happi-
 “ ness. (5.) I resolve also against Satan’s Temptations
 “ and Suggestions, promising ever to resist the Devil, and
 “ yield myself a Slave to him no longer.

“ I humbly avouch thee this Day for the LORD my
 “ GOD, and with all Veneration bowing my wretched
 “ Soul beneath thy Feet, most glorious Majesty, I do take
 “ thee, great JEHOVAH, for my Portion and Happiness,
 “ surrendering up to thee my two Mites, my Body and
 “ my Soul, to be thine own Possession and Property, vow-
 “ ing and promising, through the Aid of thy Spirit, to
 “ serve thee with them all the Days of my Life.

“ I humbly declare that I believe that JESUS CHRIST,
 “ who was slain at *Jerusalem*, is the Son of GOD and the
 “ Saviour of the World; I believe the Record, that in
 “ him there is Life eternal, and in him alone; and I do
 “ in my Heart acquiesce in that Method of Salvation by
 “ him, and intrust my Soul to him.

“ Here do I give the Hand to Thee, O blessed JESUS,
 “ and take all about me to witness that, whatever I have
 “ hitherto been, I accept of GOD’s Offer of Peace through
 “ CHRIST, taking thee for my Head and Husband, to
 “ love, honour, and obey thee before all others, as long
 “ as I live. I take thee in all thine Offices, as Prophet,
 “ Priest, and King, submitting to thy Laws, as the Rule
 “ of my Thoughts, Words, and Actions, as ever I hope
 “ through thee to be saved.

“ To thy Conduct and Influence, O most Holy Spirit,
 “ I wholly resign myself, grieving that I have so long and
 “ so

“ so much grieved thee by my Sins. O do thou go along
“ with me in all the Way that lies before me, and prepare
“ me for compleat Blessedness in Heaven! ”

“ If theret be any Deceit and Hypocrify in this Cove-
“ nant, O L ORD, discover it, I humbly beseech thee, and
“ amend them for thy Name’s Sake ! ”

“ Now Glory to G od the Father, Son, and Holy
“ Ghost, whom from this Day I shall be bold to call my
“ Father, my Redeemer, and my Sanctifier. With all
“ my Heart thou knowest that I now acquiesce in my
“ Choice, resolving not to be my own, but thine, and
“ that the Care of whatever concerns me shall be on
“ thee as my HEAD and L ORD ; humbly protesting, that
“ Failings and Infirmities on my Part (against which I
“ unfeignedly resolve, O L ORD, thou knowest) shall not
“ make void this Covenant, for so thou hast said ; and this
“ Goodness I intend not to abuse, but thence so much the
“ more to cleave close to Thee. ”

“ Now I well know thy Consent to this Covenant
“ stands recorded in Scripture, and therefore I need no
“ new Signification of it ; and, having accepted of thine
“ Offer on thine own Terms, I will henceforth wait for
“ thy Blessing and Salvation in the End. ”

“ As thou art faithful, O L ORD, pardon all my Sins,
“ and whatever is amiss in this solemn Engagement, and
“ accept me in JESUS C HRIST, in whom only I ask For-
“ giveness, and in Testimony hereof I set to my Seal
“ that G od is true in declaring him a sufficient Saviour.”

Subscribed by me

17²³
54

WILLIAM LANGFORD.

In the same Sheet of Paper which contains this C ove-
“ nant-Engagement there is what I may call an Appendix
“ dated April 3, 1725, and it runs in these Words :

“ To the above-mentioned Resolutions I saw myself
“ obliged to add these particular Vows :

“ (1.) I resolve against all Irreverence and Formality
“ in Worship and Devotion.

“ (2.) Whereas since the last Season of Communion I
“ have been wofully negligent and secure, having fallen
“ into a deep Sleep, and being a very great Stranger to
“ holy Converse with GOD, and in great Measure, except
“ on a Sabbath, or some such especial Seasons, uncon-
“ cerned about Communion with him I did, after serious
“ Repentance, solemnly promise and vow to be more di-
“ ligent and constant in the Duties of Prayer, Meditation,
“ Self-Examination, Reading the Holy Scriptures, and in
“ the Use of all Ordinances instituted by GOD for the
“ Maintenance of Fellowship with him, and Nearness to
“ him; and for that End, (3.) I did solemnly vow, by the
“ Help of divine Grace, to subordinate my Studies, and
“ all Affairs to the great Concern of Godliness, and never
“ to spend so much Time in them, nor to pursue them in
“ such a Manner as are inconsistent with a due Care about
“ my Soul, and the Exercises of true Religion.

“ The good LORD enable me to keep these Engage-
“ ments for CHRIST’s Sake! Amen.”

At *Glasgow*, as it might be well expected, as there was this holy Regard to interior vital Godliness, this Humility before GOD, this Devotedness to him, and this Dependence upon his Strength and Grace, he not only continued to prosecute his Studies, but to behave in the most exemplary Manner till *May 1727*, when he quitted the College, after he had taken the Degree of *Master of Arts*.

Upon his Return from *Scotland*, he was soon fixed with a Congregation at *Gravesend* in *Kent*, where he was ordained to the Pastoral Office.

In the Year 1734, upon the Decease of the Reverend Mr *Daniel Mayo*, he removed from *Gravesend* to *London*, and became Co-Pastor with the Reverend Mr *Thomas Bures* of the Church at *Silver-Street*, the Church that had been formerly

formerly under the Care of the very eminent Mr *John Howe*.

In the Year 1736, Mr *Langford*, as he was engaged at *Silver-street* only one Part of the Day, was invited to be an Assistant to the Reverend Mr *James Wood*, then Pastor of this Church. This Invitation he accepted, and continued in this Connection till Mr *Wood*'s Death in *May 1742*.

In the *June* following he succeeded Mr *Wood* in the Pastorship in this Place, and remained its sole Pastor till his Decease; Part of the Time having Assistants to him in his Work, and in other Part taking the whole Service of Preaching upon himself.

In 1762 the *King's College* at *Aberdeen*, at the Motion, unknown to himself, of a Brother in the Ministry, conferred on him the Degree of *Doctor of Divinity*.

Having mentioned some brief historical Anecdotes of our deceased Friend I shall now attempt to give you some short Sketch, or general Outlines of his Character; and for this Attempt I may in some Respects be qualified, however unequal I may be in others, as I had for many Years the Pleasure and Honour of a personal, and I might say intimate Acquaintance with him.

Dr *Langford* was a Minister of very good Abilities. He had a clear Understanding, and solid Judgment. His Reasonings and Observations upon Subjects were just, pertinent, and weighty, and his Compositions were easy, orderly, and substantial, not without the Mixtures at Times of a lively and beautiful Description, and some Strokes which were rather new and surprising, though couched in few, but yet well-chosen Words. "We are placed," says he, in the Application of his Funeral-Sermon for Mrs *Honor Wood**, "in a dying World, and all Things about us are mutable and perishing; we ourselves flee

" away, like Shadows, and continue not; in our best
 " Estate here below we are altogether Vanity. Death is
 " written upon all our Creature-Comforts, and inwrought
 " in our Natures, and what is our whole Life but an un-
 " interrupted Motion to the Grave?" " Every one who
 " is born of God," says he, in his Sermon intitled, *Truth*
 and *Love united* †, " has a certain Greatness of Soul in-
 fused into him, He is in some good Measure raised above
 " Self and Creatures, and devoted to his Maker and Sa-
 " viour, in whose Cause he wishes to unite the Boldness
 " of the Lion with the Gentleness of the Lamb, and
 " the Wisdom of the Serpent with the Innocency of
 " the Dove." " The Gospel of CHRIST" (a Sen-
 tence which I well remember falling from his Lips in
 an occasional Sermon) " humbles us without leaving us in
 " Despair, and raises us without the least Countenance to
 " our Pride." " What, says he, shall we have a Concern
 " for *, if not for Souls, Kindred-Souls, Souls for which
 " CHRIST gave himself a Ransom? Indeed, my Friends,
 " those who show not that they have a Value for the
 " Souls of others give a poor Proof of being sensible of
 " the Worth of their own." And excellent is his Expla-
 nation of our LORD's Words, *the Light of the Body is the*
Eye; if therefore thine Eye be single, thy whole Body shall be
 full of Light; but if thine Eye be evil, thy whole Body shall
 be full of Darkness; if therefore the Light that is in thee be
 Darkness, how great is that Darkness? " The single Eye,"
 says the Doctor ‡, " is the clear Knowledge and lively
 " Faith of the Truth, which sanctify the Will, Affec-
 tions, and Practice; and the evil Eye, is an unbelieving
 " and prejudiced Mind, which corrupts the Heart and
 " Life. — And how dangerous is the State of that Soul
 " whose Understanding, which should be its Guide, is
 " its Seducer?" His

† Page 6.

‡ *Truth and Love united*, Page 28.‡ *Truth and Love united*, Page 12.

His Views of the Doctrines of the Gospel were what are generally styled *Calvinistical*; not that he called any Man Father on Earth, but the Sentiments, which appeared to him to be contained in the Bible, and which he deduced thence, agreed with the Tenets of that eminent Reformer. I will take the Liberty of representing to you the Articles of his Faith in his own Words from a Sermon which he delivered at the Admission of Dr Trotter to the Pastoral Charge of the Scots Congregation in *Swallow-street Chapel*. Insisting on the great Duty of Ministers, that of testifying of **CHRIST**, from *Act. xxviii. 4.* he says *, " We Ministers are the Witnesses of **CHRIST**, and the chief Matter of our Report is the same with that of the Apostles, " that **JESUS CHRIST** came into the World to save guilty, " helpless, perishing Sinners, and that **God** so loved the " *World*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever be- " lieves in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life. We " preach not Ourselves, but **Christ Jesus the Lord**, his Di- " vinity, Incarnation, Obedience, and Sufferings for us; " his glorious Resurrection, Ascension, and Exaltation at " the Right-Hand of **God**, as the Prophet, High-Priest, " and King of his Church; his Atonement and perfect " Satisfaction for Sin; his everlasting Righteousness, by " the Imputation of which all who believe are justified; " the Necessity of Repentance and Faith in his Blood, " and of Holiness, as the Evidence and Fruit of Faith; " the internal Work of the Spirit in Regeneration and " Sanctification; the Promises and Precepts of the New- " Covenant of Grace; the second Coming of **CHRIST** to " Judgment, and the eternal Issues of it in the Happiness " and Misery of the *World* to come. These are some of " the great Things of **God**, which we are called to testify, " as Men who have believed and embraced them for the " Salvation of our own Souls, and who, from our Ac- " quaintance

"
" acquaintance with CHRIST, and Love to him, desire to
" recommend them to the Faith and Acceptation of our
" Fellow-Creatures."

These were in brief the Sentiments which our worthy Brother considered as the Doctrines of the Gospel, and as what he was bound to testify to others in the Course of his Ministry, and which accordingly he freely and faithfully preached, as you of this Church and Congregation are Witnesses, and indeed the World itself in the Discourses which at different Times he published *. These, I have no Doubt, he viewed as the Truths of Scripture, the Articles of his Instruction as an Ambassador for CHRIST, and as the Roots of heavenly Comfort, and vital, practical Godliness; and may I not truly say of him, as he does in his Sermon on the Death of the Reverend Mr *Edward Godwin* †, " that the great and peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel were his Delight, that these he opened with good Judgment, that these he defended with a Zeal not furious, but fervent, and that these he applied in lively Addresses to Mens Consciences and Hearts."

May I be permitted to observe that Dr *Langford*'s Views of the Gospel were the same with the Views of those Men of GOD, that Cloud of Witnesses in

the

* These Discourses were, A Sermon on the Death of Mrs *Honor Wood*, 1737.—On the Death of the Reverend Mr *James Wood*, 1742.—On the Death of the Reverend Mr *Thomas Bures*, 1747.—A Sermon to the Charity-School in *Gravel-lane, Southwark*, 1747-8.—A Sermon at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr *John Sheldon* at *Canterbury*, 1749.—A Sermon on the Death of the Reverend Mr *Edward Godwin*, 1764.—A Charge at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr *Thomas Prentice*, 1764.—A Sermon at the Admission of the Reverend Dr *John Trotter* to the Pastoral Office in *Swallow-street Chapel*, 1770.—A Sermon to the Correspondent Board in *London* of the Honourable Society in *Scotland* for propagating Christian Knowledge, 1774.—And two Discourses, in different Years, on the 1st of *August* to the Society that support the Lord's-Day Morning-Lecture in *Little St Helen's*. N. B. He was chosen a Lecturer to this Society in the Year 1735, and continued in the Lecture till his Death.

† Page 29.

the last Century, whose Preaching, whose Labours, whose Writings, whose Lives, whose magnanimous Contempt of this World, when it came in Competition with their Duty to their GOD, and whose hard Sufferings in the Cause of their divine Master were so illustrious, so exemplary, so evidential of the Power of Religion, and in short so edifying and useful to the Church and the World *, and that it may well become us to consider, whether in the same Degree in which these Doctrines, with their powerful Application to the Heart, have been neglected, the Interests of internal Piety and Holiness, with their amiable and excellent Fruits, have not visibly withered and languished, and brought on that Day of small Things, which I fear we have much Reason to acknowledge and lament.

Let me add in the something-like the Picture I would fain draw of Dr *Langford*, that he was a Man acquainted with his own Heart, and who maintained an holy Discipline there. He was not the Keeper of other Mens Vineyards, while his own was neglected, and suffered to be over-run with Thorns and Briers. Since his Decease several Manuscripts of his have been put into my Hands, and, though they are mostly drawn up in a Short-Hand which I cannot decipher, yet I have from the Writing at large here and there intermixed and collected the following Passages, penned by him at different Times, and in different Frames of Spirit:—*I have been led to a serious Review of my Sins, and an humble Confession of them, with Faith in the Mercy of God, thro' Jesus Christ—Beware, O my Soul, of spiritual Pride, and keep close to God in his Way, and he will assuredly establish thy Desires*

to

* See the Nonconformist's Memorial, being an Account of the Ministers who were ejected or silenced after the Restoration, particularly by the Act of Uniformity, which took Place on *Bartholomew-Day*, Aug. 24, 1662, containing a concise View of their Lives and Characters, their Principles, Sufferings, and printed Works, by *Samuel Palmer*. An excellent, and instructive Performance.

to his own Glory—Not suitably affected in religious Conferences and Prayers—I have been much out of Frame, tempted and perplexed about Trifles—Too remiss in the Care of my Heart; far from God in Family and secret Duties. The Lord be merciful to me!—Many sweet Seasons of late in secret Prayer; Revivals of my dead Faith and Hope—I have been made deeply sensible of my ungrateful Behaviour to a good God, who had so lately met with me, and lifted up the Light of his Countenance upon me. I wept bitterly, and mourned after God, and cried to him for Pardon—Made to see that one Thing in all God's Way with me for many Years past has been to take me off from my own Righteousness. I desire to fly to Christ's Righteousness. The Lord grant me Rest there! Never may I be beaten off from that Refuge, from that sure and blessed Foundation of Peace, Hope, Purity, and Joy! Amen—A memorable Season of God's manifested Love to my Soul in the Night-Time after deep Abasement. O what Love did this excite in my Heart! What Wonder and Praise! What Humiliation, and entire Resignation to the divine Will for Life and Death—On the Conclusion of a Fast-Day, My Business now is to follow Confession and Prayer with personal Reformation, to watch over my Spirit lest Pride and Vanity enter in and corrupt me, and to be careful of my whole Conduct in secret, in the Family, and in public Life—Had this Day Liberty in secret Prayer. Among other Things I was enabled to appeal to God, that if he would say to me, “I am thy God, and will bring thee safe to Heaven at last, but here are two Ways to the future Bliss which I offer to thy Choice, I will either give thee Thousands of Gold and Silver, but without the Sense of my Love, and the Sweetness of habitual Communion with me, or I will give thee the Sense of my Love, and high Measures of spiritual Joy, but attended with Poverty and manifold Afflictions;” I would say in this Case, “Lord, let me have ever so little of this World, with much of thy comfortable Presence, rather than all the World, with but little of thy Consolations.”

I may with great Truth, in representing the Character of Dr *Langford*, add that his whole Converse and Behaviour were most exemplary, and highly becoming his sacred Profession. As to Spirituality, when was there any Thing light and vain to be heard from his Lips? And how often did they teach Knowledge, and speak what was truly savoury, and for the Use of Edifying? As to Uprightness, when was he ever known to flatter and deceive, or deviate in any Respect from the strictest Rules of Probity and Honour? As to Humility, who can remember in him any Instances of arrogant Speeches, any haughty supercilious Airs, any Desire of undue Power, or any proud Ostentation of himself? Superiors, Inferiors, and Equals, I am well persuaded, were alike Witnesses of the Loveliness of his Conduct, and were treated with the Respects due to their several Situations. As to his Meekness, I never knew him, from what I recollect, during the many Years I was acquainted with him, on any Occasion whatever kindled into Passion, or uttering so much as one sharp Inve&tive, or angry Word? As to his Tenderness and Compassion, how sympathetic was he with the Afflicted, and how ready to offer up his warmest Prayers, and do the kindest Things in his Power for their Support and Relief? And as to Charity, when was he ever heard to pass hasty and hard Censures upon others, or when did he ever return Evil for Evil, if it could be possible that any should at any Time unkindly treat him? Indeed he had the most perfect Good-Nature. Kindness and Benevolence were inwrought into his very Soul, and you might as well have attempted to separate its essential Powers, as rend away from it these divine Graces. In a Word, Dr *Langford*, and for the Truth of what I am saying, I appeal to you his Church and Congregation, was a most striking Resemblance of Archbishop *Leighton*, and what Bishop *Burnett* has said of the one, may be justly applied to the other. "He was
 " possessed,"

" possessed," says the Bishop *, " with the highest and noblest Sense of divine Things. He had the lowest Thoughts of himself. He had such a Command of Temper, that in a great Variety of Accidents, and in a Course of several Years intimate Conversation with him, I never observed the least Sign of Passion, but upon one single Occasion. He kept himself in such a constant Recollection, that I do not remember that I ever heard him say one idle Word. There was a visible Tendency in what he said to raise his own Mind, and the Minds of those he conversed with to serious Reflection. But, though the whole Course of his Life was strict and contemplative, yet he had not the least Sourness in his Temper. He had the greatest Virtues with the perfect Humility that ever I saw in any Man; and I never saw him in any other Temper, but that which I wished to be in in the last Minutes of my Life."

These are the Sketches, the hasty Outlines of the deceased Dr *Langford's* Character.

As for his Departure from our World it was easy and gentle. His Constitution had been evidently declining for some Time past. An Hoarseness, which compelled him to whisper, rather than allowed him to speak, had hung upon him for some Years, and at last heavily oppressed him, and much hindered his public Usefulness. I never heard him murmur or complain under the divine Dispensation, though, doubtless, it was a severe Trial to him. He hoped to have a Relief from his Infirmities, and a Revival, if it were the Will of GOD, and for that End retired to a Friend's House in the Country †. Thither he came on the Saturday Afternoon, April 22, walked in the Garden, and was chearful in the Evening. He went to Bed, passed some Hours, though not without Restlessness, at about four o'Clock

* History of his own Time, Vol. I. P. 186. and Pastoral Care, Chap. 9.

† Mr Joseph Jacobs's at Croydon.

o'Clock on the **LORD's**-Day Morning was evidently struck with Death, and at six, without any Sigh or Groan, as if he was literally falling asleep, breathed his last, and, having just lived to begin another Sabbath on Earth, entered on his everlasting Sabbath with his **God** in Glory. He was heard to say in the Night, though, as it is supposed, not apprehending that he was heard by any, "I have been in Pain through Fear and Unbelief, but now all is removed by Faith." *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the End of that Man is Peace.*

For some Time before his Decease the good Man seemed to be on the Borders of Heaven. There was a remarkable Spirituality in the Temper of his Soul, which discovered itself particularly in the Administration of the Sacraments of the **LORD's** Supper, and Baptism, and I well remember that, dining with him at the House of a Friend, not three Weeks before his Death, he returned Thanks in such a peculiar Manner, I mean for Devotion and Heavenly-mindedness, that I was so much struck as to wish to have had it in my Power to have taken down what he said in his own Language. By how much the nearer he came to the Centre of his Rest, by so much the more did his Motions to it seem to be accelerated, and, if Heaven did not descend to him, yet he appeared to be in a Manner caught up into it in the last Days of his Sojournment in mortal Clay. How aptly may we apply the Lines of Mr *Waller* to our worthy Brother at the Close of Life?

The Soul, with nobler Resolutions deckt,
The Body stooping, does herself erect :
No mortal Parts are requisite to raise
Her, that unbodied can her Maker praise.—
The Soul's dark Cottage batter'd and decay'd
Lets in new Light thro' Chinks which Time has made :
Stronger by Weakness, wiser Men become,
As they draw near to their eternal Home :

Leaving

Leaving the old, both Worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the Threshold of the new.

All that I shall say further shall be a few Words to you, his Family, to you his Church and Congregation, and to all of us who are here assembled.

As to you his Family, let me beseech you to alleviate your Sorrows by the Consideration not only of that supreme, and sovereign LORD of all, who has removed your dear Relative from you, but also of the high Favour he has granted you that the Husband and the Father were spared to you to such a good old Age, and that, like a Shock of Corn, he is gone to Glory in his Season, full of Years, full of the Fruits of Righteousness, and meet for that paradisaical Garner into which I doubt not he is received. Encourage yourselves in your God, strive to be Comforts to each other, and to be Followers of your dear Husband, your dear Father in the same Paths of Holiness to the same Heaven, where the Separation, the short temporary Separation, occasioned by his Death, shall be no more, and you shall meet him and dwell with him in the Regions of Immortality and Joy. And may the many Prayers, which I doubt not he has sent up for you from Time to Time to the Throne of Grace, descend in the Showers of the richest Blessings upon you, both in this Life, and in that which is to come! May you, particularly, my dear Brother*, who stood in so near a Relation to the dear Deceased, as an Assistant to him in the Ministry, and as his Son by Marriage, and who have imbibed the Sentiments of your worthy Pastor and Father, and appear to be closely pursuing his most excellent Example, find your Soul strengthened and comforted in the LORD your God! may you enjoy many Years of Comfort and Usefulness in the Ministry of the Gospel! and may the Mantle

Manitē of the departed *Elijah* descend upon you; I mean a double Portion of his Spirit!

As for you his Church and Congregation let me exhort you to remember your Pastor, not only so as to lament his Loss, (for what a Loss is the Removal of such a Constellation of Graces from our dark impoverished World, and especially from you who enjoyed his Labours, his Prayers, and his Pattern !) but so as to recal his holy Instructions, Advices, and Charges, and his amiable Example of Piety and Holiness, and may you be incessant and importunate at the Mercy-Seat that GOD would have Compassion upon you, who are left as Sheep without a Shepherd, and provide for you a Pastor after his own Heart, who shall feed you with Knowledge and Understanding. The earthen Vessel is broken, but the divine Treasure still remains. The Under-Shepherds die, but the great Shepherd lives, and *is the same Yesterday, To-day, and for ever.* I cannot offer up a better Petition for you than that you may be blessed with a Pastor of the same Sentiments, the same Abilities, the same Experience, the same Spirit, the same holy and heavenly Conversation with those of your late Minister, who, I doubt not, has died in the LORD, and is now for ever happy with him. May another *Reynolds* *, or another *Langford* fill this Pulpit, and this Sanctuary with the divine Glory !

As to all of us, let us suffer the Word of Exhortation. We are all frail, dying Creatures, all under the Sentence of Death, all soon to pay the Debt of Nature; or rather the Debt of Sin. Let not the Saints, the Ministers of GOD live in vain, or die in vain as to us, but let us be quickened by their holy Lives, and their happy Deaths, that so,

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in

* The Reverend Mr *Thomas Reynolds*, many Years Pastor of the Church at the *Weigb-Houſe*.

in whatever Spheres we are called to act, whether public or private, we may serve our Generation according to the Will of GOD, and may have our Portion at last among the Dead, who die in the L O R D, who rest from their Labours, and whose Works follow them. To be thus blest, who is there who would not choose to live and die a Christian? Thus whether we live, we shall live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we shall die unto the Lord, so that whether we live or die, we shall be the Lord's *.

* Rom. xiv. 8.



The

The Blessedness of dying in the L O R D,
Rev. xiv. 13.

An H Y M N Sung after SERMON.

I.

FROM the eternal Throne on high
With a kind Rainbow crown'd *,
A Voice descended, and my Ears
Imbib'd the blissful Sound :

II.

Write what is spoken by thy G o d,
And let thy faithful Page
Transmit the Mercy and the Truth
Thro' ev'ry future Age.

III.

“ Happy, for ever happy, They,
“ Who in the L O R D have dy'd,
“ From the bright Moment which the Bands
“ Of Life and Pain unty'd.

IV.

“ Yea, said the Spirit,” and confirm'd
The Oracle divine,
“ From ev'ry Grief and Burden freed
“ On Thrones of Bliss they shine :

V.

“ The pious Works their Hands have wrought
“ Attend them to the Skies,
“ And from the World they left behind
“ Like Clouds of Incense rise.”

VI.

Such was the Saint, the Man of G o d,
Who once adorn'd this Place.
Such may we be in Life and Death
By the same Pow'r and Grace !

S P E E C H
DELIVERED AT THE
INTERIMENT
OF THE

Rev. WILLIAM LANGFORD, D.D.

At the Burial-Ground in *Bunhill-Fields*,

May 3, 1775.

My Fellow-Creatures, Fellow-Sinners, Fellow-Mortals, and Fellow-Immortals,

IN what a solemn Spot are we here assembled? *Golgotha*, the Place of a Scull? What Graves clustered upon Graves? What Tombs rising upon Tombs? How is human Earth ejected to make Room for human Earth! The Valley of dry Bones, the Valley of the Shadow of Death! Here the ghastly Tyrant has erected his Throne, has planted his Banners, and reigns in wide Devastation, while he daily sees fresh Numbers added to his Conquests, and enlarging his tremendous Dominion.

How humiliating, how awful is Death? Death, the Breaker up of our Families, the Divider of the dearest Friends,

Friends, the Destroyer of the tenderest and most sacred Connexions, the Extinguisher of all sublunary Hopes and Joys, the Dissolver of the Tie between Flesh and Spirit, the Defacer and Murderer of our Bodies, and the Remover of our Spirits into we know not what undiscovered, and unexplored Regions, and new and amazing Scenes of Existence.

Thus humiliating, thus awful is Death, and as a pious Poet * truly says,

Death could not a more sad Retinue find :

Sickness and Pain before, and Darkness all behind.

But is there nothing to illuminate, and break the Force of Death? Is there nothing to put in Balance against his Terrors and Distresses? Yes, my Friends, there is; adored be the infinite Mercy of our GOD and Father! JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, the Son of Man, the Ransom of Sinners, the Prince of Life, the LORD from Heaven is the Vanquisher of Death, and has in his Hands the Keys of the Grave; and his Gospel, his Covenant of Grace, casts such a Light over all their Darkness and Terrors, as not only to dispel them, but brighten and transform our forest Evils and Plagues into Privileges and Blessings. What is Death to a true Believer in CHRIST, to one sheltered under his Merits, and interested in his Salvation, but the Port of Rest, the Gate of Heaven, the Angel of Dismission from this Vale of Vanity and Vicissitude, of Sin and Sorrow, and the Angel of Conveyance to the Mansions on high, to the perfect and permanent Felicity in the Paradise and beatific Presence and Fruition of his GOD in Glory? So harmless, so friendly is Death to the Souls of Believers through their Relation to their dear and mighty Redeemer.

And even as to the Bodies of Believers, though it is confessed Death has a Dominion over them, yet it is but

for

for a Time, and in Comparison of the long unbounded Duration of Life and Blessedness that follows after, but a very short Time ; and as, when they die, and return to Dust, they sleep in JESUS, so ere long He, the LORD of the Dead and the Living, shall come himself in Person, and demand them from the Power of Death, and from the Prison of the Grave, and array them with a Glory like that which invests his own Body, and thus shall all his Chosen and Redeemed in their compleat Selves be for ever happy with the LORD, and the eternal Triumph shall be sung, *O Death, where is thy Sting ? O Grave, where is thy Victory ? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law ; but Thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* *.

Let us pause a Moment to consider in what a different Manner Believers descend to the Grave from that in which they shall rise from it. They lie down in the Grave in Weakness, Corruption, and Ruin, under the corroding Curse of the first *Adam*, but they shall ascend from it in Power, Glory, and Immortality, under the vivifying Blessing of the second *Adam*, whose Salvation shall efface all the Dishonours of our fallen Nature, as the Shades of the Night are all dissolved in the Light of the Morning. They lie down breathless, insensible, mouldering Clods, but they shall arise to shine like Stars, like Suns in the Kingdom of their Father.

And now what are become of the Glooms of Death ? Or where are the Terrors of the devouring Grave ? Are they not all scattered, dispelled, and gone, I mean as to all true Believers in JESUS CHRIST, though to none but them ? Among this happy Number, and not the least eminent among them, I have the best Grounds to include our deceased Brother, whose early Piety, whose long and faithful Labours in our LORD's Vineyard, whose unspotted and most exemplary Life and Conversation, whose amiable

Assemblage

Assemblage of Graces and Virtues, softened, but yet improved by an uncommon Veil of Humility cast over them, oblige us to conclude that he was a rich Partaker of the Salvation in JESUS CHRIST, and that he is now, with the Spirits of just Men made perfect, triumphing in eternal Glory.

Go then, my Friends, from this Grave with the Views by Faith of that ineffable and everlasting Happiness, that Joy of his LORD into which his Spirit is now entered. Go from this Grave hearing, as it were, the Voice of the Son of GOD, (it shall one Day undoubtedly be heard) calling our Brother's sleeping Dust into immortal Life and Glory; and go from this Grave with the most serious Concern and Inquiry whether you are interested in JESUS CHRIST, and have your Share in these inestimable Blessings, that so you may not, when you depart hence, pass from the transient Pains of the first into the everlasting Horrors of the second Death; and may not at the Resurrection come forth from your Graves as Malefactors, who have their Chains struck off to be haled from their Prisons to a more tremendous Doom, but may rise as the Children, the *Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ*, rise in the Image of your dear Redeemer, in that blessed Morning, (how are Time's swift Pinions hastening it on!) when He shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them who believe. *Bebold, I come quickly*, says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness; *Bebold, I come quickly*, says the Head, the Proprietor of his Church, the Resurrection and the Life, the Author of eternal Salvation to all such as believe upon him, and obey him. May we be ever ready to say, *Amen, Even so come, Lord Jesus!*

F. I. N. I. S.

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